

The Baptist Record

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Somali Christian baptized despite persecution risks

By Craig Bird

MOGADISHU, Somalia (BP) — Abdul was baptized in late November — less than 100 yards from four Somali Muslims bowing toward Mecca for their afternoon prayers.

Across town, Ali slipped furtively from one hiding place to another. It was the third day since he had been condemned to death by four mosques for passing out Bibles and telling others about Jesus.

If any Somalis outside the small, tightly knit groups of local Christians find out what Abdul did, he could soon be living the same kind of life as Ali.

"I'm not yelling to the whole world what I've done, just telling a few people," Abdul said. "I have

hesitated to be baptized for many years. But it is clear in the Bible that Jesus was baptized — not because he needed to be but as an example we must follow."

Abdul and Ali — not their real names — could well be the prototypes of the future for those who join the Somali evangelical Christian community.

One option is to aggressively — some would say foolishly — confront the Muslim culture of the country with the claims of Jesus. The other is to "tell a few people" while building relationships and growing a strong, hardy core of believers. Some would say that lacks boldness.

But, in a country like Somalia, how do you apply the biblical con-

cept of being wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove? The last official government statistics before the outbreak of civil war in 1990 listed 2,000 Catholics and 1,000 Protestants out of a population of more than 5 million. Evangelicals estimated 600 "believers" in their ranks five years ago, but now say many, perhaps most of those have fled the country.

A consensus among Abdul and his friends is that "probably 100" evangelical Christians live in Mogadishu, the embattled Somali capital. Abdul personally knows only 10. Perhaps 20 have been baptized; the average wait between profession of faith in Christ and immersion is seven years.

This tiny group attracts the interest of Christians on temporary duty in Somali with Western military units, as well as Christians who work for the secular aid organizations now keeping the country alive.

But it also attracts the intense interest of resurgent Muslim fundamentalist forces that have swept the country alongside the looting of Somali warlords.

"Before the war we could dress in Western clothes," said one Muslim woman who befriended some Christian aid workers. "Now we couldn't dare wear anything except traditional dresses or we would be punished."

The same holds true with tolerance of religious differences, according to Abdul. "Before, if you wanted to become a Christian, the government's attitude was, 'Go ahead, just don't bother anyone else.' Most people just thought you were stupid — but they wouldn't fight you over it," he explained.

Today, newspapers publish public death threats against anyone who abandons Islam for Christianity. It's widely believed that militant Muslim groups from Sudan and Iran have established themselves as enforcement squads in the holy war within the civil war.

Ali's latest troubles began when he gave Bibles to two of his uncles — who promptly turned him in to Muslim authorities. That Friday, death sentences for blasphemy were proclaimed by the imams of four mosques. Ali returned home to find his house looted. Neighbors warned him "people have been here looking for you every two hours." He fled to the home of another Somali Christian.

"Not only has Ali suffered terrible loss personally, but he's exposing other Somali Christians

who now run grave risks by assisting him," one Christian said.

Numbers aren't firm, but an estimated 75% of Somalis who convert to Christianity either revert to Islam under pressure or are killed once it is known what they have done.

"We need time to help new Christians mature and be ready to stand the persecution before too many people know," Abdul added. "I need a strong heart. Pray for me."

He didn't even tell his wife he had become a Christian in 1985 until they had agreed to be married. Then he offered to break the engagement. To his surprise, she

was thrilled.

"Oh, I have been a Christian for years but was afraid if I told you you wouldn't marry me," she said.

But she wasn't baptized with her husband. "She's too big right now — our first baby is due in January," he said. And another friend who was to be immersed with him decided to wait awhile longer.

When, and if, they are baptized, they will have made an overpowering commitment to their faith.

How they live it — or die for it — will shape the Christian church in Somalia. Just as Abdul and Ali are shaping it now.

Bird writes for FMB.



A WET CONGRATULATIONS — "Public baptism" in Somalia is a pretty private affair because of persecution of Somali Christians in the overwhelmingly Muslim country. But the few who observe such baptisms feel joy enough for most large crowds. Here a still-dripping Somali believer is embraced by a friend. Behind them hang various explosives that have been dug from the Somali sand and disarmed by U.S. military forces in Somalia. (BP photos by Melissa Bird)



A STEADYING ARM — This Somali man waited eight years after becoming a Christian before accepting a believer's baptism. Public profession of Christianity in Muslim Somalia can be life-threatening. Just as he clings to the arm of the person immersing him, he will need to cling to other Christians in ravaged Somalia to nurture and sustain his faith.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

Trends of 1994

Trends, forecasts, and prophetic utterances always contain enough truth to worry over. Our new year is rather prolific in this area, and being so close to the beginning of the third millennium is enough to raise concern. We have 365 gifts of days before us, and Farmer Jim, a popular Jackson radio announcer, reminds us they've never been used. We will put first tracks on the face of 1994.

Some trends of interest to Southern Baptists have been listed and reported to the Baptist Sunday School Board by Weiner, Edrich, and Brown, a New York consulting firm.

The era of deprivation is upon us. The time of plenty has ended. Not everyone can expect employment nor retirement benefits. Watch for the class society with the extremely rich and the extremely poor among us. Forget time to smell the flowers; we demand instant communication and response. There will be global calamities, and the USA will be unable to care for our own, let alone be a universal supplier. Tax-

ation will increase. The mentality of being a victim will rise over that of the victor. Many programs will be geared to promote dependency.

The family concept will suffer. Non-parent families will rise in number as indebtedness becomes a major problem. Health care will be rationed, and not everyone will have access to it. We will scream for protection from crime, and protection in health matters, food products, auto and airline safety.

AIDS could well be siren-sounding for unexpected diseases. Global travel adds up to global diseases. The graying of the baby boomers spells an ever-increasing concern for health.

Women will continue to gain clout and political offices. Watch for more studies in male/female brain usage. Males live in a world of things, females live in a world of relationships. That is why the care and feeding of a pick-up truck is more vital to a man than attending the wedding of a distant relative.

These things and a hundred more we've got to fathom will

plague us in this decade. They will affect our church members and our missions programs. Add to these the things that are on our minds already, such as the nation of immigrants undergoing a change of attitude — nations that, population-wise, are drying up, and World A nations that continue to abound. Shopping habits will be altered. The catalog, the TV, and telephone will be major avenues of buying and selling.

There is also this frightening statement made last year by church growth consultant Lyle Schaller: "If the year is 1953 our churches are in good shape. If the year is 1993, our churches are in trouble."

Have we kept pace in communication, emotional needs, baby care, parking lots, new methods of outreach, and differences in doing mission work?

All this leads to the spiritual equation. We need to pray, commit our ways unto the Lord, and let him direct our paths. When he finishes, the waters assuage, the lions are docile, the storm ceases. He is still in control.

Thoughts by a graveside

It is difficult to agree or disagree with the following article. Death is a strong teacher, and leaves a lasting impact. Congregations magazine carried the article for consideration, perhaps to make us think. — Editor

This comes from William Sloane Coffin, former pastor of The Riverside Church in New York. Coffin's words are on the occasion of his son Alex's death in an automobile accident.

"My own broken heart is mending. And I have relearned one lesson: Love not only begets love, it transmits strength. A neighbor of mine came by one day after the death and said, 'I just don't understand the will of God.' Instantly I was up and in hot pursuit swarming all over her. 'I'll say you don't,' I said. 'Do you think it was the will of God that Alex never fixed that lousy windshield wiper of his, that he was probably driving too fast in such a storm, that he probably had a couple of beers too many? Do you think it is God's will that there are no street lights along that stretch of road, and no guardrail separating the road and Boston harbor?'"

Nothing infuriates Coffin so much as "the incapacity of seemingly intelligent people to get it through their heads that God doesn't go around this world with his finger on triggers, his fist

around knives, his hands on steering wheels. God is dead set against all unnatural deaths. And Christ spent an inordinate amount of time delivering people from paralysis, insanity, leprosy, and muteness. Which is not to say that there are no nature-caused deaths, deaths that are untimely and slow and pain-ridden. But violent deaths, such as the one Alex died — to understand those is a piece of cake. As his younger brother

put it simply, standing at the head of the casket at the funeral: 'You blew it, buddy. You blew it.' The one thing that should never be said when someone dies is, 'It is the will of God.' Never do we know enough to say that. My own consolation lies in knowing that it was not the will of God that Alex died; that when the waves closed over the sinking car, God's heart was the first of all our hearts to break."

Foreign mission giving becomes sacrificial habit

DALLAS (BP) — In the depths of the Great Depression, Nobie McGill, who was president of Woman's Missionary Union at First Church, Lewisville, Texas, set a goal to give a dollar for foreign missions through the Lottie Moon Christmas offering.

She was raising two children and didn't have money for stamps to mail letters. But, somehow, throughout the year, she put back a penny at a time until, by Christmas, she had saved 99 cents.

"It was the happiest money I ever gave to anything," recalls McGill, 88, a retired Texas WMU employee who lives at Buckner Baptist Inn, Dallas.

History repeated itself in 1983 when McGill was so moved by a

message by Minette Drumwright, director of International Prayer Strategy, Foreign Mission Board, that she thought, "Oh I wish I could give \$1,000 in a year for the Lottie Moon Offering."

She prayed, "Lord, let me give it," and began to put her pennies, quarters, and dollars together until by offering time she had \$1,000 for foreign missions, over and above her tithe.

For several years she was able to give \$1,000 a year. Then she progressed to give \$2,000, then \$3,000, then \$4,000, and finally \$5,000 for foreign missions in a single year.

"I can't do many things," said McGill, "... but I can get money together, and the Lord has really blessed me."

"NOT SO FAST, PASTOR! WHAT'S THIS I HEAR ABOUT A SERMON SERIES ON SOME FELLOW TAKING UP WITH A STREET WALKER AND TRYING TO PASS HIMSELF OFF AS A PROPHET?"



1994 Winter Bible Study

(Formerly January Bible Study)

Hosea: God's Redeeming Love

THE FRAGMENTS

The outward appearance

He was a hard man, this Ebenezer Scrooge of the county. Seemingly, there is one for every generation in every county. Most everyone was indebted to him. His sly smile was a reminder that, "You owe me and I own you and just about all you have." Robin Hood would have been happier in Sherwood Forest had this man lived there.

It was in the Depression and my father owed him money. Papa, unlike his children, didn't like to be indebted to any man. Mr. Scrooge had one of the few cars in the community and when he drove up the dogs, chicken, and sometimes the children, all ran under the house.

Bro. Dun-Bradstreet didn't come into the house of a creditor; you always had to go out to meet him. It was one of the first drive-in service facilities invented.

He made his money the old fashion way, one creditor at a time. He was not listed in the Fortune 500, but he had a good running start on anyone else in town.

His office was a cubby-hole in his store and a short swing-gate admitted only the man. Behind his elevated cage, he wore a green duck-bill cap, black sleeve protec-

tors, and sat on a high stool. In this position he always looked down on the reluctant visitor.

Papa never said much about him. "He can squeeze the buffalo off a nickel," was about the worst thing.

The years passed and when I came out of the service, I needed some money. Ole Scrooge let me have it at a fair rate of interest. Moreover, he was friendly and went out of his way to help people. He and my father were friends.

"When did he change?" I asked.

"Oh, he's always been that way. Even back in the Depression he would let folks have money when others would not. Half the folks around here would have starved had he not let us borrow money."

I discovered him to be a very sensitive man who came up the hard way and would let any working man have money. He was a credit to his church and community.

I had let the barking dogs and some envious people determine how I felt toward the man. Look not upon the outward appearance to determine the worth of a man.

— GH

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Editor.....Guy Henderson
Associate Editor.....William H. Perkins Jr.
Advertising/News writer.....Teresa Dickens
Editorial Associate.....Florence Larrimore
Circulation Manager.....Renee Walley
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Anti-Watchtower campaigner says...

Success too costly for Jehovah's Witness hotline

DANVILLE, Va. (BP) — A toll-free phone line offering recorded criticisms of Jehovah's Witnesses' beliefs was too successful to continue because of rising phone bills, said its sponsor.

The line received more than 20,000 calls from almost every area code in the nation during its 15 months of operation, said George Kesterson, director of Watching the Watchtower.

A lack of financial support, however, failed to pay more than \$6,000 worth of phone bills, said Kesterson, a former Jehovah's Witness. "The phone line was more successful than one person could handle."

Kesterson, a Mission Service Corps volunteer with the Home Mission Board's Interfaith Witness Department, had worked full time in the ministry he set up with the help of inheritance money.

Established in September 1991, the line had weekly messages challenging the teachings and beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses, also known as members of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.

The society, based in Brooklyn, N.Y., is considered a cult, or Christian deviation, because it rejects traditional Christian concepts of the nature of God, Jesus Christ, humanity, and salvation, said Maurice Smith, associate

director of the HMB's Interfaith Witness Department.

Jehovah's Witnesses believe salvation is only possible for members of the Watchtower Society, Smith said.

They also believe in two classes of saved citizens: 144,000 who will go to heaven and the rest who will live in a paradise earth, he said.

Five different predictions for Armageddon, when the society claimed all non-Jehovah's Witnesses would be destroyed, have gone unfulfilled.

Kesterson said the group appeals to people because it claims to have concrete answers to biblical questions.

"People want to understand what happens to us when we die. People want to understand the nature of God," he said. "We tend to linger on the salvation message rather than giving them hard doctrinal truths."

Of the 3,000 people weekly who are baptized into the Watchtower Society, at least 65% come from traditional Christian backgrounds, Kesterson said.

"I never won anybody (to the Watchtower) who wasn't a church member anywhere," he said, adding one of his converts was a Southern Baptist Sunday School teacher.

By David Winfrey

Once a member of the society, the group forbids any questioning of Watchtower teachings, he said.

In 1991, the Watchtower Society had about 901,000 active participants in America and 4.2 million worldwide.

The organization's growth, however, is about 1% annually, Kesterson said.

"They've got more and more Jehovah's Witnesses working door-to-door more and more to get less and less," he said, adding the society is losing the equivalent of three congregations (about 60 people each) daily.

"Unfortunately the Jehovah's Witness movement is growing bountifully in the foreign coun-

tries because they do not have access to the early Watchtower writings," he said.

"For people who have nothing with which to compare, it sounds like a really good deal. It's only after you've been in that you start getting doubts."

Winfrey is associate director, News and Information, HMB.

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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Youth conference garner's another record attendance

More than 3,200 youths registered for the Youth Evangelism Conference held at the Mississippi College Coliseum Dec. 27-28. The group divided into several seminars, discussing current topics and also heard Ken Smith of Gainesville, Fla.; Neil McClen-

honest with you, can a man take fire into his bosom and not be burned? Where there is a fire, you often hear the alarm. The Holy Spirit has set off the alarm, young people. Avoid sexual immorality. Flee from it."

Smith challenged the youths to be faithful to God on their campuses and bear positive witness for the Lord.

Ken Hall, youth minister of First Church, Columbus, brought 42 young people to the conference. He said this was his third conference. "They've all been good. The rap sessions have been most helpful to our group."

There were 23 professions of faith and 75 other decisions made during the conference.

The conference was under the direction of James Fancher and the Evangelism Youth Committee. It is sponsored by the Evangelism Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, J. Garland McKee, director.



Heath Cooper of Meridian Community College says this is his eighth time to attend. "The speakers are always good." Matt Eakes of Philadelphia agrees: "I enjoy making new friends from this group."

don of Southwestern Seminary; Point of Grace, a singing group from Houston, Texas; and Anna Hutto of Nashville. Mog and Wog, a comedian couple, from West Palm Beach, Fla., also performed.

McClendon spoke bluntly on immorality: "I'll be



Jennifer Munn, of West Heights Church, Pontotoc, said the singing was the real blessing of the conference.



"True Love Waits," a Baptist Sunday School Board sexual purity campaign, promotes the biblical mandate of abstinence outside of marriage. Hundreds of

youths, pledging to remain pure, signed cards which were displayed at Mississippi College, site of the Youth Evangelism Conference.

Oklahoma pastor/former BSSB executive replaced on planning committee

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP) — Gary Cook, pastor of First Church in Lawton and a former vice president at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, has been replaced on the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma's strategic planning committee.

Committee chairman David Willets said he replaced Cook because of Cook's recent public involvement with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The committee is charged with the task of developing a strategic plan to guide future work of the convention.

The conflict between supporters of the CBF and Southern Baptist Convention leadership spilled over into presentations and motions at the state convention in November. Willets said a number of people expressed concern over Cook's serving on the committee because of his apparent support of

the CBF.

"I just called Gary and asked him, in deference to the central purpose and focus of the strategic planning committee, that he give me the assurance that he would not participate in public, aggressive support of CBF during his service on the committee. I did not ask him to change his beliefs. He has every right as a Baptist to choose his path. But he could not give me that assurance and cited the fact he had recently agreed to serve on the CBFO coordinating committee," Willets said.

Cook commented that the 6,600-member Lawton church is one of Oklahoma's leaders in Cooperative Program giving. "We are ahead of last year and made a 25% increase in our Lottie Moon offering last year," he said. "As a result, I have been serving on the pastor's network promoting the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering."

Still no mail sack

Some time around Nov. 8, a mail sack was lost en route to the Baptist Building. The Post Office continues its search for the sack, which contained CP gifts and bills due for various departments. Churches and individuals are requested to send replacement checks for payment of amounts owed to The Baptist Record.

The original checks, if found, will be returned to their senders. We regret this inconvenience. Please call Betty Anne Bailey at 968-3800, ext. 3821, for more information.



Dangerfield doubly awarded

NASHVILLE — Roy Edgemon (left), director of the Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family ministry development division, presents Mose Dangerfield, director of Discipleship Training, family ministry, and church recreation for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, with an award for the largest percentage of churches reporting Discipleship Training in the Southeast region. Mississippi also received an award for the most youths participating in state youth Bible drills for the Southeast region. Edgemon presented the awards at the board's annual planning meetings in December. (BSSB photo by David Rogers)

Iranian man facing death for professing Christianity

BRUSSELS, Belgium (BP) — As Christians everywhere prepared to celebrate Jesus' birth, a Christian man in Iran already imprisoned for almost nine years prepared to face possible death because of his faith.

The fate of Mehdi Dibaj was unknown Dec. 22, Christians inside Iran reported. But they fear the worst following Dibaj's Dec. 3 trial, during which he refused to renounce Christianity and presented a strong testimony to his faith in Christ.

Security concerns delayed getting news of Dibaj to the outside world, but a written copy of his message to the court has been sent to churches in the West.

Once a nominal Muslim, Dibaj became a Christian years ago. He has served as evangelist and also helped translate the New Testament into Farsi, the main language of Iran. He was arrested and charged with apostasy from Islam. Christians in Iran say Dibaj spent two of his eight-plus years of imprisonment in solitary confinement in a 3-by-3-foot cell with no lights.

"I am a Christian, a sinner who believes Jesus has died for my sins on the cross and who by his resur-

rection and victory over death has made me righteous in the presence of the holy God," Dibaj told the court trying him Dec. 3.

"I have been charged with 'Apostasy'! The invisible God who knows our hearts has given assurance to us Christians that we are not among the apostates who will perish but among the believers so that we may save our lives. In Islamic law an apostate is one who does not believe in God, the prophets, or the resurrection of the dead. We Christians believe in all three!

"They say, 'You were a Muslim and you have become a Christian.' No, for many years I had no religion," he continued. "After searching and studying, I accepted God's call and I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ in order to receive eternal life. People choose their religion but a Christian is chosen by Christ. He says, 'You have not chosen me but I have chosen you.' From when? Before the foundation of the world."

The most recent known execution of an Iranian Christian occurred Dec. 3, 1990, when Hoo-sein Soodmand, an Assemblies of God pastor, was hanged.

Literacy training workshop offered by Hinds-Madison

A 16-hour ARW (Adult Reading and Writing) workshop will be held at the Hinds-Madison Associational Office, 6530 Dogwood View Parkway, Jackson, on: Jan. 14, 6:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.; Jan 15, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Jan. 21, 6:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.; and Jan. 22, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

The workshop will be led by Jeanette Canzoneri, Home Mission

Board missions associate, and is open to anyone interested in teaching someone to read and write.

Fee is \$7, which will cover the cost of materials. Participants should bring a sack lunch for the Saturday sessions. To pre-register, contact Jeanette Canzoneri at (601) 972-0609, or J.W. Brister at (601) 362-8676.

The homosexual agenda and the church: silence equals consent

By John S. Allen

This past July, Sister Spirit, Inc. purchased 120 acres for \$60,000 in south Jones County near the community of Ovet. They began immediately to construct Camp Sister Spirit. In October, their newsletter, *The Grapevine*, was published. This document unintentionally came into the hands of the community and alarmed many of the local residents. They discovered their new neighbors to be largely a lesbian group with the intent of establishing the "Lesbian community at Camp Sister Spirit." They are connected with and funded by national lesbian organizations. "Camp Sister Spirit's 1st Annual Lesbian Conference" was scheduled for Dec. 2-5, 1993.

The local residents began to voice their opposition to Camp Sister Spirit. The print and television media from Hattiesburg entered the dispute.

The WDAM-TV news director interviewed the camp founders on News 7 Journal. He began the program by giving Sister Spirit, Inc., and its founders his unqualified endorsement as positive additions to the community, referred to the opposition as "bashing" them and as "rednecks" in the pejorative sense.

He concluded the program with another endorsement. The *Hattiesburg American* editorialized on the dispute on Wednesday, Dec. 8. They characterized the opponents of Sister Spirit as having "faces twisted with hate" at a public meeting held in Ovet Dec. 6. To the *American* editors, the meeting rang with "Echoes of Old Salem" and "the eerie specter of past witch hunts."

It is interesting to note that the *American* is owned by Gannett. The Gannett Co. was recognized as "progressive" because of its support for homosexual causes in September 1993 by the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Asso-

ciation (AFA Journal, Nov./Dec. 1993).

National attention was focused on the situation when the Sister Spirit leaders and representatives of the opposition group appeared on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" on Dec. 21. During the "Oprah Show," the camp representatives gave a "100%" endorsement to the 1993 March on Washington Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Platform Demands. Specifically they endorsed the following demands: 1. lower the age-of-consent for homosexual and heterosexual sex, 2. implementation of homosexual,

operate, as a business, a 180-bed regional retreat for lesbians, to impact our community with their "services," chiefly education, and to address social issues. Based on their endorsement of the Platform Demands and their personal statements, they wish to see our schools teach the homosexual lifestyle positively, secure homosexual teachers through affirmative action, and remove the age-of-consent barriers that protect minors from sexual advances from adults. Considering the teaching of Scripture that the practicing homosexual cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10), the Ovet community is alarmed. Ovet has been invaded by what it considers a spiritual and moral danger.

What can be done? Pray. This is a spiritual problem, and only God can give the victory. Pray that the community will honor God by upholding its standard of biblical morality. Pray that no more area people will be drawn into the Sister Spirit fold; at least one has already joined. Pray that the grace of God will bring salvation to the homosexuals through faith in Jesus Christ.

Secondly, let your opinion be known. Call or write to the media that have sided with Camp Sister Spirit and tell them your opinion. Ask your Christian friends who are advertisers to do the same. When you have an opportunity, take a stand. Do it in Christian love, but do it firmly. On this issue we can afford no compromise.

Peter watched at a distance as evil and good struggled in the courtyard of the high priest on the night of Jesus' trial. By his silence, and later with oaths, he denied his Lord. I trust that in this hour, when the very moral foundations of our society are under attack, that the church will not give silent consent to evil.

Allen is pastor, First Church, Richton.

"... Take a stand. Do it in Christian love, but do it firmly."

— John S. Allen

bisexual, and transgendered curriculum at all levels of education, 3. access to all programs of the Boy Scouts of America. Their contention is that we are ignorant and intolerant and that they have come to help us.

What is the problem? Our community has had other homosexual individuals. A few years ago a homosexual couple operated a business on Main Street. To my knowledge, there has been no opposition seeking the removal of these individuals from the community. To be sure, the lifestyle was not condoned and salvation was seen as the greatest need in their lives, but there was no attempt to push them out.

However, Camp Sister Spirit is different. They are an activist group with a radical agenda that is linked to the national gay rights movement. Their intention is to

Top Ten National Stories of 1993

as selected by the editorial staff from the pages of *The Baptist Record*

1. Mississippian Jerry Rankin elected president of Foreign Mission Board
2. Baptists respond to massive Midwest flooding
3. Foreign Mission Board sets record with 495 missionary appointments
4. WMU expansion statement stirs strong words in SBC
5. "True Love Waits" campaign makes appearance on NBC's *Today Show*
6. Overseas baptisms set all-time record
7. Southern Seminary trustees elect Al Mohler president
8. Freemasonry report incites accusations of bias, results in Leazer dismissal
9. SBC Executive Committee members pledge to up their churches' CP gifts
10. SBC/CBF wage war of words on Cooperative Program, Lottie Moon

1994 State Legislative session —

Bills of concern to Christians before the two houses

By Paul G. Jones II

The 1994 Mississippi Legislature opened Jan. 4 for a 90-day session. The cry for new sources of money will drive the legislature to consider many schemes to pad the state's coffers. Over 514 bills, resolutions, and concurrent resolutions have been pre-filed.

The Christian Action Commission has examined the pre-filed bills, which addresses social, ethical, moral, or legal issues of concern to Mississippi Baptist churches. During the session, legislators can be reached at the Capitol by writing them at Box 1018, Jackson, MS, 39215 or by calling them at (601) 359-3770.

Abortion: HB (House Bill) 147 would prohibit the location of abortion facilities less than 1,500 feet from any church, school, or kindergarten.

Alcohol and other drugs: HB 99 would create a statewide drug strike force to serve under the direction of the governor.

HB 100 would require blood alcohol tests of boat operators involved in a boat accident that results in a death.

HB 101, HB 258, and SB (Sen-

ate Bill) 2062 would make it unlawful to operate a watercraft while under the influence of intoxicating liquor and to provide for a presumption for testing based on operation of the watercraft.

HB 149 would prohibit smoking in certain indoor areas.

HB 183 would authorize the Alcoholic Beverage Control Division to enforce the laws regarding beer and light wine.

HB 270 would permit alcoholic beverages to be brought in from out of state.

SB 2058 would define as a manufacturer any person who holds a retail permit and produces beer on his premises for sale and consumption.

SB 2101 would prohibit the holder of an alcohol permit to allow consumption after the normal hours of operation.

SB 2116 would mandate that a person convicted for a second or subsequent felony violation under the uniformed controlled substance law shall be sentenced to life in prison.

Church and state: HB 222, SB 2030, and SB 2074 would permit nonsectarian, nonproselytizing,

student-initiated voluntary prayer on public school property or other property at school-related activities including student sporting events, graduation or commencement activities, and other student assemblies and events.

HB 235 would exempt from the child care licensing law any child care facility that is owned, operated, or sponsored by a church or religious organization.

Criminal justice: HB 113 would provide enhanced penalties for gang-related criminal activities and participation in a street gang with the knowledge that it participates in criminal activities.

HB 124 would provide that no person who has been convicted of murder, manslaughter, sex crimes, robbery, or armed robbery shall be eligible for parole.

HB 260 would prohibit the possession of handguns by minors and HB 261 would provide that the felonious use of a handgun by a minor shall not be kept confidential.

HB 265 would make it a felony to sell a weapon to a minor.

SB 2173 would revise the prohibition of possession of weapons in or near schools.

Education: HB 217 would require that publications of original documents shall be utilized in high school history classes.

Elections: HB 29 would require that certain political action committees shall identify the source of certain contributions expended on candidates in Mississippi. HB 32 would require the identification of persons or groups who contribute in excess of \$100 to a campaign.

HB 31 would require that a candidate or other person required to file any campaign finance disclosure form who fails to do so in a timely manner shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

HB 81 would revise the requirements for the reporting of expenditures related to lobbying and to revise the penalties for violation of such laws.

HB 86 would transfer the duty of regulating lobbying from the Secretary of State to the Mississippi Ethics Commission.

HB 91 would require a registered lobbyist to wear an identification badge to identify the name of person and the employer.

HB 95 would create the Lobbying Law Reform Act of 1994.

SB 2076 would limit the amount of campaign contributions and expenditures for certain political candidates.

Environment: HB 42 would establish a container deposit and refund program in the state.

Family: HB 76 and SB 2161 would provide that there shall be no presumption that child custody should be awarded to the mother

during divorce proceedings.

HB 82 and 83 would create a new grounds for divorce which would include the grounds of irreconcilable differences based upon proof of activity that substantially impairs the joint purposes of the marriage.

HB 79 would provide that persons 18 years or older may marry without parental permission.

HB 92 would require that any person delinquent in child support payments shall have all licenses and permits issued to that person by the state or any political subdivision suspended for a certain period of time.

HB 93 would create a presumption that no parent who has a history of perpetuating family violence shall be awarded sole or joint custody of children and to restrict the visitation of such parent.

HB 118 would provide that a person accused of child abuse shall be informed of the identity of the person making the accusation.

Gambling: HB 196 would clarify the law so to allow gambling devices, machines, or equipment in a county or municipality that may not have approved gambling aboard cruise vessels or vessels.

HB 239 and 240 is an act to develop and implement a gamblers' rehabilitation program in the department of mental health and to create the "Mississippi Gamblers' Rehabilitation Fund."

SB 2015 would prohibit public officials from having any monetary interest in any business and organization holding a gambling license in the state of Mississippi, or doing business with any business or organization holding a gambling license.

SB 2039 would require that non-smoking areas be established in gambling establishments.

Eight state sites host satellite teleconference

The seven-hour teleconference "Experiencing God" will be broadcast by satellite Feb. 12, beginning at 10 a.m., to eight sites around Mississippi.

They are: Oakhurst Church, Clarksdale (contact Tommy Tutor, 624-8551); North Greenwood Church, Greenwood (contact James Phillips, 453-2801); First Church, Grenada (contact Don Connerly, 226-3661); First Church, Hattiesburg (contact Wayne Pierce, 544-0100); Hinds-Madison Association, Jackson (contact James Webster, 362-8676); Jones Association, Laurel (contact Al Nix, 649-8114); Morgantown Church, Natchez (contact James Walters, 422-2793); and Parkway Church, Tupelo (contact Andrew Bumpus, 842-7843).

The conference will feature Henry Blackaby and Claude King,

SB 2043 would eliminate the restriction that legal gambling can only occur on board vessels adjacent to counties bordering the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi River. This bill would allow legal gambling in any county in the state if not rejected by the citizens of the county within a short period after first notice.

Safety: HB 74 would require proof of financial responsibility before receiving motor vehicle license tags.

HB 94 would provide that failure to use a seat belt may be considered as evidence of contributory negligence.

HB 165 would increase from two years to four years the age of a child for whom a child passenger restraint device must be used in motor vehicles.

HB 166, 168, 241, SB 2020 and SB 2077 would provide that a violation of the mandatory safety belt law would be a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of \$25.

State government: HCR 2 would allow the state to vote on the abolition of the office of Lieutenant Governor.

HCR 4 would allow the people to vote on the proposition to incrementally reduce the size of the legislature.

HCR 5 would create a new section of the constitution to prohibit a person serving more than three terms in the same elected office. SCR 506 and 507 would attempt the same outcome but would change the number of terms that could be served.

SB 2009 would limit the size of House to 60 members and the Senate to 30 members after 1995.

SB 2029 would reduce the size of the legislature based upon the decennial census for the year 2000.

authors of *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God*, along with Avery Willis and Roy Edgemon. It is designed to train persons who want to seek revival and renewal in their relationships to God. The conference will also include time for call-in questions.

To register, call (615) 251-2294, or write: Teleconferences, P.O. Box 24001, Nashville, TN 37234. The \$25 registration fee includes materials.

Top Ten State Stories of 1993

as selected by the editorial staff from the pages of *The Baptist Record*

1. MC President Lewis Nobles resigns amid mismanagement allegations
2. Mississippian Jerry Rankin elected president of Foreign Mission Board
3. Jackson high school spurs national school prayer debate
4. Mississippi Baptists work in partnerships with Zimbabwe, Honduras, Alaska, Illinois
5. World Changers, Mississippi River Ministry tackle Delta poverty
6. Mississippi Baptists contribute \$21,000,000 to Cooperative Program
7. Mississippi Baptists contribute \$5,000,000 to Lottie Moon Offering
8. Youth Night draws over 18,000 young people to Jackson stadium
9. Mississippi Singing Churchmen spread gospel in old Soviet Union
10. Anonymous Mississippi donor gives \$1,000,000 to Foreign Mission Board

Experiencing God

January is Make Your Will month — Dying with no will can deprive relatives and Baptist causes

GIVE
That
All
May
Know



"The sun will
never set on the
mission work in
which I will have
a part."

Make Your Will Month

NASHVILLE (BP) — Clara Smith, an 80-year-old widow, has no will. She lives alone and is in poor health. Though her husband, Bill, died a year ago, Clara is financially comfortable — thanks to years of frugal savings and investment.

Clara and Bill Smith (not their real names) had no children.

Since Bill's death, Clara's greatest comfort has come from her local Southern Baptist church and from Bill's niece, Shirley, whose family has always been close.

Clara has told friends that she wants to leave a tithe of her estate to her church's building fund, with Shirley receiving the rest.

Friends have warned Clara that her wishes won't be followed unless she has a will. But Clara says her plans are well-known to her family and will surely be honored by those who handle her estate.

Who is right? Not Clara. Unless she makes a will, her local church and niece-in-law, Shirley, will receive nothing.

Since Clara was one of five children, then according to the laws of her state, Clara's estate will be divided four ways — one-fourth to each of her brothers and sisters.

One sister has been in a nursing home for years, supported by Medicaid. Clara's other sister is financially independent and has no need of her money.

Since Clara's two brothers have already died, their share of her estate will be divided between their descendants.

Though Clara loves all her family, she is closest to Shirley and barely knows her own nieces and nephews, most of whom live in other states.

According to estate planners

and financial advisors, Clara should follow the advice of Southern Baptists' annual January emphasis, which is "Make Your Will Month."

"If you don't have a will, the state's got one for you," said Hollis Johnson, president of the Foundation, which promotes the special emphasis. "The state's will does not have a provision for charitable causes."

"If an individual had particular Baptist causes — such as a local church, Baptist school, or other ministry — then they won't be able to give through their estate," Johnson said, "unless they make a will."

But it is not just elderly people with lots of savings who need a will.

"Everyone over the age of 18 needs a will," said Chester Jernigan, vice-president for development at the Foundation of Alabama. "It allows you to decide the manner in which your property is distributed. You can select your own executor and name a guardian for your minor children or for a disabled family member. Otherwise, the state does it for you."

Angelina ("Dee Dee") Jackson, who is the Alabama foundation's legal counsel, agreed. "Basically, everybody needs a will, no matter what their financial situation is. In Montgomery County (in Alabama), it costs around \$65 to probate a will. It's not as expensive as most people think."

Jackson said a will helps survivors deal with "the aftermath of somebody's death.... It gives the family a starting point for dealing with the desires of the one who died."

David Coleman, director of development at the Foreign Mission Board, said, "Many Southern Baptists are not aware that they

can give beyond their lifetime to the causes they loved while they were here on earth, such as Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong, their local church, and other Baptist causes."

Some Christian wills leave money to a Baptist cause, such as the FMB, which may spend the money immediately upon receiving it for current budgetary needs.

But other wills have a longer lasting impact by placing the money in an endowment fund, where the money is held "in perpetuity" — meaning "from now until the Lord comes again," said Jernigan.

Though the principal is not spent, the interest earned is distributed annually to a Baptist cause that was dear to the heart of the deceased, Jernigan said.

Endowments managed by the foundations of state Baptist conventions provide money for such diverse causes as children's homes, local church cemetery and building funds, world hunger relief, missions, and Baptist schools.

Jernigan noted that endowments are not just for wealthy Baptists. A relatively small amount of money — even \$1,000 or less — can be held in trust with the interest benefiting a Baptist cause, he said.

"If you don't make a will," said Coleman, "the state will take care of your estate for you. But it is not likely that most of us would be satisfied with the distribution the state would make."

Though the Baptist foundations do not themselves write wills for people, most will assist the attorney of someone who wants to leave money to a Baptist cause.

For more information on making a Christian will, contact the office of your state Foundation or the Foundation in Nashville.

LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ed.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

I am the parent of an intelligent child. I'm concerned that the common sense part of my child's intelligence is not developing as it should. At what age should this develop and is there anything I can do to help?

The best way to obtain common sense is through a variety of experiences. Children need stimulation from physical, emotional, social, mental, and psychological sources. Putting your child in safe environments and allowing the use of his/her own resources to solve problems is the first step in developing common sense. This could be in the form of a Sunday School class, choir, sports, music, or even play — one of the best ways a child learns to deal with problems. Play allows a child to problem-solve and make creative decisions. A second way to develop common sense is to let your child learn from failure. By letting our children see that life is difficult, they learn to seek the Lord and use their God-given senses to "work out" difficulties. Common sense comes as a child learns to think through his/her options. This takes time on the parent's part, but it reaps

tremendous benefits as the child matures.

Every year I make a few resolutions and by the end of January, I break them. How can I stay on course?

I find this acrostic really helpful:

A — Be accountable to someone else. When we reveal ourselves to another person or a small group, we become accountable to them.

I — Imagine yourself reaching your goal. Whether it is reading the Bible through, losing weight, or whatever, an image on which you can concentrate will encourage you to reach your mark.

M — Accomplish your goal in miniature quantities. Take your resolution and divide it into small pieces that can be easily accomplished. Keep your perspective by being patient and taking your time rather than wishing for the whole thing to be accomplished.

If you AIM at nothing, you will hit it. If you AIM for the finish line, you will win the race set before you.

Just for seniors —

Reminiscences are choice blessings

Following is the fourth in a series of articles on senior adults written by Robert J. Hastings, retired editor of the *Illinois Baptist*, newsjournal of the Illinois Baptist State Association.

James Herriot is the popular author of *All Creatures Great and Small* plus other books about his life in rural England. He says he began writing "because of a compulsion to tell people what it was like to be an animal doctor in the days before penicillin."

In the March 1984 *Reader's Digest*, Herriot denied he's "living in the past" when he tells his stories.

"To me," he explained, "my past is a sweet, safe place to be, and through the medium of these stories I shall spend a little time (there) now and then."

Does anyone accuse you of liv-

ing in the past and always talking about the "good old days"? If so, don't apologize, because the ability to reminisce is one of life's choice blessings. As Herriot so beautifully said, "... my past is a sweet, safe place to be."

When I was taking drivers' ed in high school, our instructor said something I've always remembered: "Every 10 or 15 seconds, glance in the rear view mirror. Safe drivers know who's behind them, as well as ahead."

I see a larger dimension to his advice (which, by the way, I practice every time I drive). And that dimension is this: Whereas we give priority to the great windshield of life, plotting our future, it's also important to glance back occasionally at yesterday.

Memories not only give us pleasure — they also serve as a reser-

voir of wisdom. By looking in the rear view mirror of life, we profit from our mistakes, our foolishness, our immaturity.

Soren Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher, said "Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards."

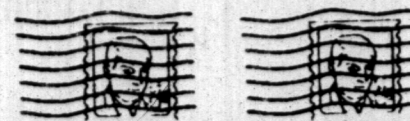
One of the benefits of living longer is time to dip into the past, for enjoyment and profit as well as understanding. Memory flashes beautiful videos before us — videos of childhood playmates, our parents and siblings, a favorite neighbor, a fond aunt, falling in love, our own children as youngsters, our first apartment or home, our conversion and baptism.

But we mustn't tarry there, forever squinting into tiny mirrors of yesterday. We'll invest most of our energy in the open windshields and wide horizons of today.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name and address not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.



Letters to the editor



Prayer in schools?

Editor:

Many of the problems with our schools could be solved by returning the school systems to the local people and getting government out of it.

Some have taken the word Christian and tried to make it a bad word. Being a true Christian is not something that we do or some show that we put on. It isn't walking on a certain side of a wall. Being a Christian is who we are, wherever we are. It is a part of our life. We simply cannot lay it down at the doors of our schools or workplaces. If God has truly got hold and changed your life, he is such an embedded part of your life that you cannot flip the switch at the door — nor should we have to. Nor is that what our forefathers intended. Their intent was very clear, to keep government out of our churches. Yet we see the opposite. We see a government that wants to control our churches yet does not want Christian people involved with it. We should wake

up and realize that the intent of those who are trying to remove prayer, Bibles, and religion, have a very specific intent. They hate Christ, not Buddha, not secular humanist. They want complete power and cannot have it as long as Christ reigns.

What's more amazing is that we as Baptists, no, as God's people, have so timidly addressed this subject. For the few who have made a public statement, it has required very careful reading to determine if they were for or against prayer in school and to what degree. It seems to me that something is wrong in the corporate part of our state convention when we see this apathy and uncertainty at this level, furthermore when we devote two entire pages in one issue of *The Baptist Record* to advertising festivals and only two small columns about the prayer in school issue by someone whose comments are again ambiguous.

How can there be so much apathy among God's people when religious liberties are being assaulted. We do not seem to be

willing to take a stand for God on anything. Our problems are not guns, drugs, gambling, abortion, or even evil lost people. It was once said that "we have found the enemy and he is us." People called by God's name are the problem. God is the way — prayer and repentance are the key. No wonder that 2 Chronicles 7:14 has been quoted so often and accurately as of recent. Leaders should take inventory. If weighed in the balances, how would we come out.

James Dobson is quoted as asking, "At what point will you rise to defend what you believe? Is there anything worth putting your reputation or your life in jeopardy?"

If our children and our Savior are not worth standing for — God help us to get our vision back!

Kirby Craft
Mendenhall

No middle ground

Editor:

I wonder if anyone was really surprised by the report of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church that called for the acceptance and affirmation of homosexual unions and of couples living together outside of marriage. I also wonder if anyone will be surprised when our denomination openly accepts the same and other sinful behaviors. We already have those within our churches who are teaching that there is no sin in homosexuality and that science has "proved" that this behavior is genetic and therefore, must be accepted. It is strange that some individuals find error in the scriptures but will accept any so-called scientific study without question, no matter how flawed it might be. There are also those who believe and teach that since the Bible contains error, human reason must be applied in order to glean the truths from it.

According to Bill Moyer (*Baptist Record*, Nov. 11, 1993), the Bible is something in which new insights can be found but it requires our participation and experience. Moyer also states that God gives us the ability to think and reason. God does give us the ability to reason, but that reason-

ing must never be relied upon if it is contradicted by the Word of God. To do so makes the mind of man inerrant and God's Word errant. It makes man's mind the final authority through which God's Word must be sifted. God's truth is not, nor will it ever be, dependent upon anyone's participation, experience, or reasoning. God's Word is truth with or without us. I agree that God's truth is not flavor frozen in a popsicle. That flavor changes. God's Word does not. We need to be biblically accurate in all that we say, teach, and preach.

We are moving very quickly in this country to a religiosity that preaches acceptance of all beliefs, all religions, and all sin, and it will all be done in the name of love. The Bible is becoming a book that may be used for "guidance" but not for absolute truth. We need to decide. Do we put our faith in God and rely on his Word or do we put our faith in the reasoning of men? There is no middle ground.

Ida South
Mathiston

1994 Mississippi Baptist EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

January 24-25, 1994

First Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss.

Opening Session: Monday, 1:30 p.m.

Closing Session: Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.



HOWARD AULTMAN



RON DUNN



THAD HAMILTON

Monday:
Howard Aultman
Ron Dunn
Thad Hamilton
Ron Herrod
Sammy Tippitt



RON HERROD



SAMMY TIPPITT



STEVE BENNETT

Tuesday:
Steve Bennett
Ron Dunn
Jim Hooten
Jerry Passmore
Nelson Price
Sammy Tippitt



JIM HOOTEN



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Acts 1:8 Jesus





NOBTS graduates five with state connections

Five students (pictured above with seminary President Landrum P. Leavell) with Mississippi ties received doctoral degrees from New Orleans Seminary during commencement exercises on Dec. 17. They are John F. Gibson Jr., pastor of First Church, Greenwood, doctor of theology; Edward Lamar Mahaffey, pastor of Country Woods Church, Jackson, doctor of philosophy; Jay M. Richardson, pastor of Drew Church, Drew, doctor of ministry; Carla Crenshaw Street, co-pastor of Rivercrest Fellowship Church, Jackson, doctor of education; and David M. Walley, Jackson, doctor of philosophy.

Receiving master of divinity degrees during commencement exercises were J.T. Laird, Pearl, pastor of Andrew Chapel Church, Brandon; Jonathan D. Kittrell, associate pastor of Beacon Church, Hattiesburg; William E. Knight Jr., pastor of Arkadelphia Church, Bailey; Edward B. Pullen Jr., pastor of Thompson Church, Smithdale; Jeremy Lewayne Yancey from Quitman; Jorge M. Wilkes from

Hattiesburg; Terri L. Walters, youth minister at Highland Church, Pass Christian; Stacey E. Pickering, associate pastor of North McComb Church, McComb; Daniel C. Hall, pastor of Salem Church, Raymond; James David Caves from Sontag; and Matthew D. Haines from Columbus.

Receiving master of arts in Christian education were Suzanne Bigelow Cain, Columbus; Ray Hodgins, minister of youth at Midway Church, Meridian; and Stephen T. Dean, associate pastor of Pleasant Hill Church, Bogie Chitto.

Receiving associate degrees were Buddy L. Peters from Poplarville, associate of divinity in pastoral ministry; Paul DeMoney, pastor of Lawrence Church, Lawrence, associate of divinity in pastoral ministry; and Jerry V. Roberson of Silver Creek, associate of divinity in religious education.

H. Ralph Cain, pastor of Fellowship Church, Mathiston, received the bachelor of general studies degree.

William Earl Greene dies

William Earl Greene, 85, past president of Clarke College in Newton, died of congestive heart failure Thursday, Dec. 30, at South Central Regional Medical Center in Laurel. He had been a member of Pine Grove Church, Heidelberg, for 40 years.

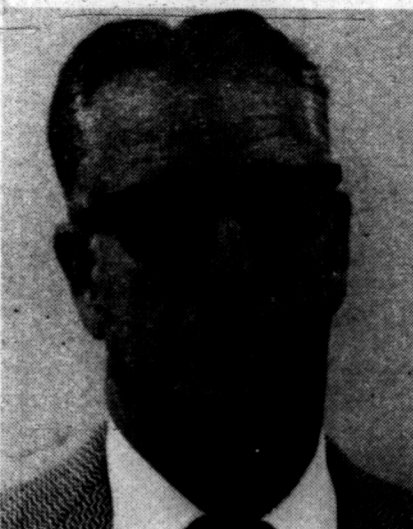
Services were held Jan. 2 in Bay Springs with burial Jan. 3 in Cora Baptist Church cemetery in Jay, Fla.

Greene, a South Carolina native, was a graduate of Clarke College, University of Southern Mississippi, and New Orleans Seminary, where he earned his doctorate in theology. He pastored churches in Mississippi, Utah, Texas, and Tennessee for 63 years, and served as director of missions in Jasper County.

Survivors include his wife, Mary; son, Earl Greene of Jay, Fla.; daughter, Mary Elyean Atkinson of Tacoma, Wash.; brothers, M.E. "Buck" Green, Meridian, T.C. Blackwell of Texas, and Philip Blackwell of

Birmingham; sisters, Hazel Parks and Mae Bell Ezell, both of Meridian; and two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to the American Diabetes Association.



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Names in the News

Charles Jackson Jr. has been appointed by the Home Mission Board to serve as a semester missionary in Hawaii from January to May. He will be the minister of music and youth at First Church, Waimea. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Jackson Jackson Sr. of Roxie, Jackson is a graduate of Copiah-Lincoln Community College, and a December graduate of Delta State University.



Randall Alan Bonner of Columbus received the master of divinity with languages degree from Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., during the commencement ceremony Dec. 18. Bonner presently serves as minister of youth and children at Parkwood Church, Rocky Mount, N.C. The son of Mr. and Mrs. Victor Bonner of Tuscaloosa, Ala., he is a graduate of Clarke College and Mississippi College.

Mississippians are graduated from Southern

Two students with Mississippi connections graduated from Southern Seminary during commencement exercises Dec. 17. Stacy Holley Hinton, daughter of Jeff and Nelda Holley of Meridian, received the master of arts in Christian education. And Mary Creely Dorris, daughter of Thelma Creely of Amory, received the master of divinity degree.

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Union Church, Pleayune (Pearl River Association), held a groundbreaking ceremony Oct. 3 for its new building. Taking part in the ceremony were members of the building advisory committee, the long range planning committee, the financial advisory committee, and Ken Rhodes, director of missions for the Pearl River Association. Terry Ledbetter is pastor.

First Church, Hattiesburg's Osborn chosen outstanding Mental Health Counselor

Baptist counselor Bill Osborn of Hattiesburg has been selected as outstanding Mental Health Counselor by the Mississippi Counseling Association. Osborn, director of clinical services for Sassafras Hill Counseling Center, Oak Grove, was honored by the association for his service as president of its clinical practice division for the past two years.

Before Osborn entered private practice as a Christian psychotherapist, he was an administrator and professor at William Carey College. He is active in the Mississippi Baptist Chaplains Association. Prior to service in Mississippi, Osborn worked in pioneer missions under the Home

Mission Board in Oregon and California. He and his family are members of First Church, Hattiesburg, where he teaches in the Discipleship Training Program.

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Just for the Record



Members of Ethel Church, Ethel (right), who had perfect attendance in Sunday School for the church year of 1992-93, pictured, front row, from left, are Jamie Rone, seven years; Kellie Rone, seven years; back row, Ginger Rone, 13 years; Charlene Rone, seven years; and Bill Purvis, Sunday School superintendent, and Beth Bell, three years.



New Zion Church, Crystal Springs, exceeded its Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal of \$5,000 on Sunday, Dec. 5. The total amount collected for that day was \$6,265.90. Leroy J. Brewer Jr. is pastor.

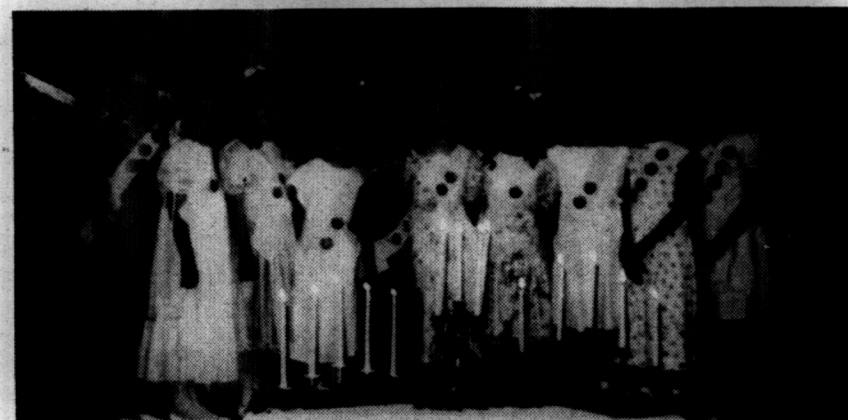


New Hope Church, Foxworth, recently held its recognition service for Mission Friends, RAs, and Acteens. Mission Friends pictured at top are Kayla Turnage, Kenny Baughman, Leah Pittman, Carley Lowe, Brittany Stringer, Mitch Ratliff, Shannon Haney, and Megan Stringer. Mission Friends leader is Beverly Kroner. RAs, first row, left to right, are Jeff Lowe, John Magee, Neil Stringer, Jeremy Stringer, Charles Morgan, Barry Stringer; second row, Brently Bates, Scott Bennett, Cameron Evans, Josh Reeves, Donavon Blackwell; third row, Adam Hicks, Ashley Bedwell, Ryan Goar, Darren Lee, and Cade Campbell. Brandle Magee, right, has completed all levels of Stuidact in Acteens.



Charles Johnson & the Revivers, the Hoppers, the Greens, and the Spokesmen will be featured in a gospel concert Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m., in Lee Hall Auditorium on the Mississippi State University campus. For ticket information, call (601) 323-8188.

Eternity, Christian music artists from Austin, Texas, will be in concert Jan. 12, 7 p.m., at First Church, Crystal Springs. For more information, call James Beasley at (601) 892-1149.



First Church, Lucedale, recently held a recognition service for its GAs with the theme, "Letting Our Light Shine." Pictured, from left, are Blaire Stringfellow, Edie McEachern, Savannah Martin, Lindsay Rae Cowart, Lindsey Gardner, Stephaine Schultz, Rachel Wilson, Jodi Cooper, Tiffany Pierce, Jennifer Williams, Selena Bullock, Michelle Schultz, and Cassie Dixon. Leaders are Peggy Curd and Sara Bullock, first and second grades; Linda Barrow and Dana Parker, third and fourth grades; and Tammy Caldwell and Melody Jones, fifth and sixth grades.

Volunteers strengthen world missions involvement from their home base

Taken from the dissertation, "Partnership in Crosscultural Mission: The Impact of Kentucky Baptist Short-term Volunteer Missions," written by Tommy G. Purvis, of Belmont, Miss., on missions involvement.

In 1972, Caldwell/Lyon (Kentucky) Baptist Association's missions program had weakened. Total missions and per capita missions receipts for the 38-member churches were only \$95,799 and \$11.03, respectively. By 1992, however, these figures increased to \$584,537 and \$54.92. Every member church now contributes to the Cooperative Program and associational missions. Total missions giving approaches 25% of total income. These changes occurred in spite of a period of population and economic decline.

What caused this trend? "I give direct credit to partnership missions for enhancing our missions involvement," says Harold Greenfield, director of missions.

From 1985-1987, 32 volunteers participated in a Kentucky-Kenya partnership. They were part of a great spiritual awakening in which thousands came to the Lord. From 1990-1993, 67 volunteers took part in a Kentucky-Brazil partnership. They helped build five chapels, held evangelistic services, and conducted Bible schools.

A study of the Caldwell/Lyon partnership missions program... revealed significant trends. As a result of their partnership missions experiences, 76% of the volunteers increased missions giving, and 96% increased their world missions knowledge. Six members

of the association have left for service with the Foreign Mission Board since the initiation of the partnership missions program; 21% plan to investigate some type of career missionary service; 56.7% pledged to encourage others to consider career missionary service. Finally, 95.5% of the volunteers are now available for future short-term service.

Volunteers have built lasting relationships with nationals, missionaries, and fellow volunteers. They have become more active witnesses at home, have experienced spiritual growth, and have incorporated their experiences into their home churches, communities, and public life — promoting world missions.

Churches sending the highest number of volunteers experienced the greatest rate of increase in both total missions and per capita missions receipts.

Summarizing the impact of partnership missions on the association, Greenfield said, "This is home base, and if we don't enliven and strengthen missions here, we won't have foreign missionaries out there."

The churches of the association are now infused with "changed" volunteers who inform fellow members about world missions. They motivate and encourage others to become personally involved. In doing so, volunteers stretch themselves beyond the church

walls and associational boundaries.

Finally, they demonstrate what happens when believers obey Jesus' command: "You will be witnesses for me... to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8, TEV). They do missions!

— Copied from FOCUS, Southern Baptist volunteers in foreign missions.

T.V. "Corky" Farris dies

T.V. "Corky" Farris, chairman of the Hebrew and Old Testament Department at Mid America Seminary in Memphis, died Dec. 14 in Germantown, Tenn., of pneumonia.

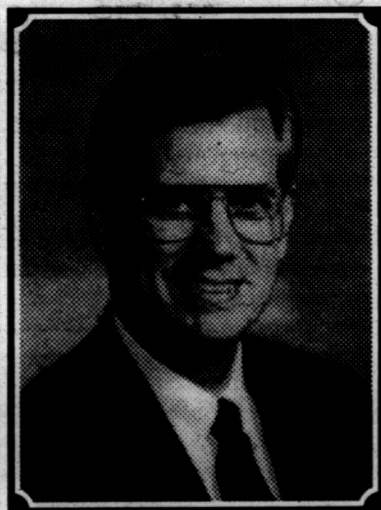
Farris, 66, was a former Southern Baptist missionary in Japan and a former associate in the Texas Baptist Evangelism Division.

Staff Changes

First Church, Grenada, recently called Bruce Hardy as minister of music. A native of Mississippi, he is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi and Southwestern Seminary. His previous place of service was minister of music/youth at First Church, Sandersville, Ga.

Churches adopt Expanded Annuity Plan

The following churches have adopted the Expanded Annuity Plan since those reported in the Nov. 11 issue of *The Baptist Record*: Jackson: Four Mile Creek and Riverside; and Wayne: Clear Creek.



Thank You, Southern Baptists,

for your support for foreign missions.

Your commitment to pray for missions and your outstanding gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering overwhelm us.

Thousands will come to know Christ because you gave to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering this year. Together, we will *Change the World Now*.

Gary Rankin
President



YOUR BRIDGE TO THE WORLD

Uniform Called to care



By Doug Bain
Luke 4

Healing a man (vv. 31-37). Jesus went to his headquarters at Capernaum, entered the local synagogue, and healed one who possessed an unclean spirit, a demon. Some biblical references to unclean spirits may be first-century terminology for psychological disorder. People even today refer to "demons of the mind." But other passages do appear to be references to demonic infestation.

That should not be too difficult for contemporary sensibilities to accept. After all, when God revealed himself most clearly, we could expect a corresponding heightened manifestation of the demonic element. There are more occurrences today than one might expect of encounters with demonic activity. One man, a minister, showed me the scratch marks down his arm from such an encounter. His house was infested. Eventually he had to move to a different house.

Even though the practice of counseling and therapy keeps us alert to issues of stress, distress, and pathology, we might be well-advised to have a healthy regard for the reality of objective evil power. Demonic activity then is a reference to paranormal powers that are disruptive to the created order, especially to human personality.

Apparently many first-century people lived in profound awe before forces that seemed to control destiny. Some people resorted to magic, astrology, and sorcery. Jesus appears here having authority over the created realm, with power over the disruptive forces.

Neither should it escape observation that this collection of verses shows Jesus caring for people in many different situations. The follower of Jesus today will be ready to care for hurting people, whatever the time, place, or occasion.

Healing Simon's mother-in-law (vv. 38-39). The text says that he healed her of a fever. This scene adds to the picture of Jesus caring for people, not just for them as "soul" but for them as total person. Jesus' concern was for healing, and that is what ministering is about — helping healing to set in. Luke in many places is careful to clarify that faith opens up the currents of healing. What an interesting notation Luke is careful to add: what this one was freely given, she freely passed on. She received caring concern and arose immediately to minister in kind. No moss gathering on her soles, or soul. There is very likely a lesson in her response.

Healing many people at evening (vv. 40-41). Folks were not flocking home at sundown, not today. They had to wait until the Sabbath was over at 6, when Sabbath rules were suspended, but then they lost no time. Word had been circulating that a healer was in town and at work and that his healing went deep. Late in the day though it may be, opportunity for healing takes higher priority. Isn't it interesting how self-destructive humans can be but still clamor for healing? And isn't it interesting too, that while the "demons" recognized Jesus was the Christ, the disciples seemed somewhat slower in learning. Those who were healed had "healing faith." But what about the caring people who brought them to be healed? They had "helping faith."

Preaching in Galilee (vv. 42-43). The gospel tradition apparently preserves a direct quote as Jesus reaffirms his own task to proclaim the dawning kingdom as good news (v. 43). Jesus has been at his headquarters in Capernaum, but now he determines to extend his ministry as well as concentrate his efforts, thus widening the circle of caring concern. ("Judaea" in verse 44 is probably not evidence of an "early Judean ministry" but is a broader reference to Palestine, so that Jesus was technically in Galilee.)

The possibility is present that Jesus' followers today will need to extend their horizons of concern, including more than just those people immediately at hand. The new year is often a time to broaden horizons, letting God lift self-imposed restrictions on our range of vision and enlarge our scope of concern. Followers of Christ are indeed called to care! But more than that, the gift of being accepted, forgiven, loved, and healed is also the gift of caring like that for others.

Bain is professor of biblical and related studies, Blue Mountain College.

Bible Book Witnesses to Jesus



By Dan Howard
John 1

Tony Campolo, in his book, *Hot Potatoes Christians Are Afraid to Touch*, stated that he had conducted several informal surveys trying to determine how people came to know Jesus as their Savior. He found that the majority of people were not reached through Christian radio, a Christian television show, or through a sermon. The majority of people in his surveys came to know the Lord through the personal witness of a friend, a relative, or a person who cared enough to share Christ.

John the Baptist and several of his disciples help us to understand in this passage that the way the gospel message began to be spread was through one person telling another and that person sharing Jesus with another. May we find encouragement in these verses to commit ourselves anew to witnessing.

John the Baptist's witness to the religious leaders (vv. 23-28). The Jewish leadership sent a committee of priests and Levites representing the Sanhedrin, which was composed of Sadducees and Pharisees, to investigate John the Baptist. They were concerned about him because there were many people thronging to him and responding to his message.

In response to their inquiries about who he was, John stated that he was not the Messiah, nor Elijah, whom the Jews believed would return before the Messiah. He also denied being the prophet Moses promised in Deuteronomy 18:15.

John then stated in the words of Isaiah 40:3 that he was a voice in the wilderness. He saw his purpose as one of preparing the way for the Messiah. John saw his role as pointing people to Jesus. This is our purpose as Christians.

John the Baptist's identification of Jesus (vv. 29-30). When we see a famous person up close, we get excited. Can you imagine how John must have felt when he saw Jesus, the Messiah?

The day after his confrontation with the religious leaders John did see Jesus. He wanted everyone to know him. John used three statements to identify Jesus. First, "the Lamb of God" identified Jesus with the Old Testament sacrificial lamb. Second, "who takes away the sin of the world" identified the purpose of Jesus. Third, "a man who has a higher rank than I, for he existed before me," identified Jesus as the one about whom he had been preaching.

Andrew's witness to Simon Peter (vv. 40-42). Andrew was one of John's disciples who began to follow Jesus. One of the first things Andrew did after he found Christ was to introduce his brother to Christ. Andrew did not have time to go to seminary or enroll in a witness-training class. All he knew was Christ, and he sought to share Christ with others. May we commit ourselves to being a witness like Andrew.

When we accept Jesus as our Savior he changes us. The change in Simon's name to Cephas (means "rock" in Hebrew) or Peter (means "rock" in Greek) indicates the change in his character. Jesus can change any person.

Jesus' conversation with Nathanael (vv. 47-49). Jesus called Philip to follow him. Philip accepted Christ and then found Nathanael (v. 45). Nathanael was skeptical at first. Jesus met that skepticism with kindness and praise. After he met Jesus his attitude changed.

With that piercing glance, Jesus assessed Nathanael as a devout Israelite who sought to serve God and live honestly. We cannot hide anything from Jesus. He knows our every thought and action.

When Jesus reveals to us the truth about ourselves, we are faced with a decision. We can choose to continue to go the way we are going, or we can choose to follow Christ. Even though Nathanael was a devout person, he was lost without Christ. May our decision be the same as Nathanael's, to acknowledge Jesus as Teacher, Son of God, and King of kings.

Howard is pastor of Woodville Church, Woodville.

Life and Work Can I be forgiven?



By Billie Buckley
Luke 5

I remember those front yard races growing up on First Avenue. We would line up with all our neighborhood friends, and someone would call, "On your mark! Get set! Go!"

We took off with flying feet and freedom, headed as fast as we could go to the finish line on those lazy hot summer days. No excess baggage was allowed.

Is that not what we need to hear today — "No excess baggage allowed"? Yet, we all carry around heavy baggage that probably contains a long-time accumulation of unforgiven guilt.

In the study of this lesson, let's just follow the simple instructions given for my childhood racing days. These instructions could rid us of paralyzing guilt and allow us to experience the topic of our lesson — I can be forgiven.

On your mark (vv. 15-20). You are right on the mark of getting rid of the excess baggage of paralyzing guilt when you recognize the sinner — it's you, it's me. Two questions may come to the surface here: What causes the paralysis, and what is the cure for a paralytic?

Physically and spiritually, the man was helpless to do anything for himself. Today this shatteredness in our lives is pointed out by the Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit causes us to cry out, "I recognize the cause of my spiritual paralysis. It is my independent relationship with God."

Remember, sin is more than scarlet deeds or dull indifference. These are acts of sins, not sins. We are born with sin that separated us from God's holiness. The cure for this birth defect is to accept God's offer of a new birth.

Get set (vv. 21-25). Getting set comes from accepting Jesus' authority over the sinner in us. Oswald Chambers addresses this idea in his work, *Our Brilliant Heritage*, when he reminds us, "Sin is nothing but a big bully. Sin was killed at the Cross of Christ; it has no power over those who are set free by the atonement and authority of Jesus." When we accept this authority, we can do two things: Leave behind the criticism of others, and take the approval of Jesus with us.

Jesus' chief critics, the Pharisees, spoke in a negative way against him because their information about him was not complete. Even today criticism is hurled for this reason, or because others want to feel smug and superior. This is just the opposite of the discernment given by the Holy Spirit.

The approval of Jesus frees us to arise today even as the paralyzed man did. Many want to hesitate in their relationship with God. Jesus asks us to repent and arise and stand in right relationship with him.

Ready (vv. 29-31). Being ready allows us to desire others to be victorious, too. Understand that this victory is not a prize or an award. It is the reality of God himself working in and through us. Two contests are open to us — the contempt and the caring contests.

The contempt contest is sponsored by harshness. It is a protest march against caring; a black mark against healing; a cover-up for self-centeredness. Yet, there is another contest we can enter today.

The caring contest is sponsored by love and has God in the center. The reward to those who win this contest is more love — and more caring to be poured out to others in his name.

Go (v. 32). Go with the freedom that comes from laying down your load of guilt and sin. With this freedom we don't have to plod through our days of ignorance and fear. We can take a daring leap of trust as we feel the breath of his forgiveness.

The beauty of this race is that everyone can win. I never won those races on First Avenue, but by God's authority and Jesus' death, I can be forgiven, my paralysis can be healed, and the excess baggage of guilt can be left behind.

Buckley is a member of Petal Harvey Church, Petal.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



The Baptist Children's Village

Ronny E. Robinson, Executive Director
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(601) 922-2242

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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

OCT. 1, 1993 -
OCT. 31, 1993

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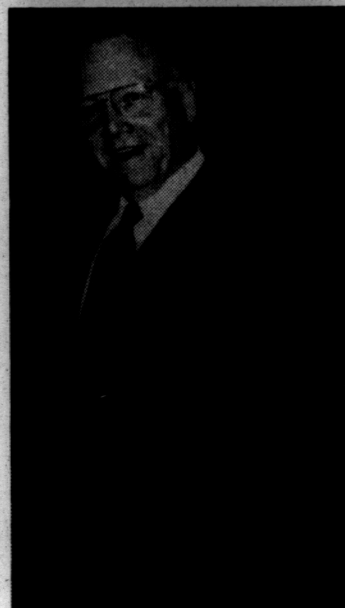
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NOV. 1, 1993-
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Guest speakers at the Dedication Service for our new Merrill Administration Building and Portrait honoring Mr. and Mrs. Paul Nunnery (top left), Executive Director emeritus, were Dr. Bill Causey (bottom left) and Rev. John McCall (top right). Mr. Nunnery and Rev. Robinson, current Executive Director, also addressed our guests. Childcare Workers, Charlie and Diana Jones (bottom right) brought special music for the service. One of our cottages was open for visitors and refreshments were served at Merrill Administration Building named for Bess Odom Merrill whose estate made possible the new building.

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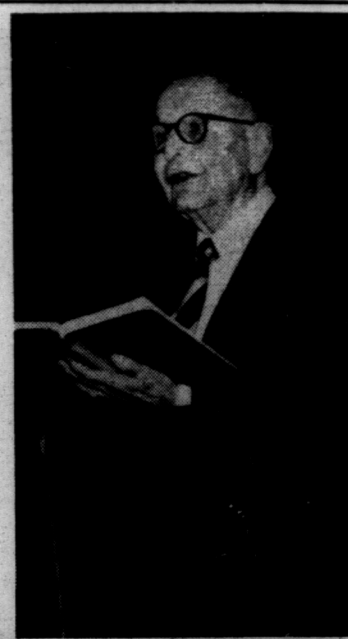
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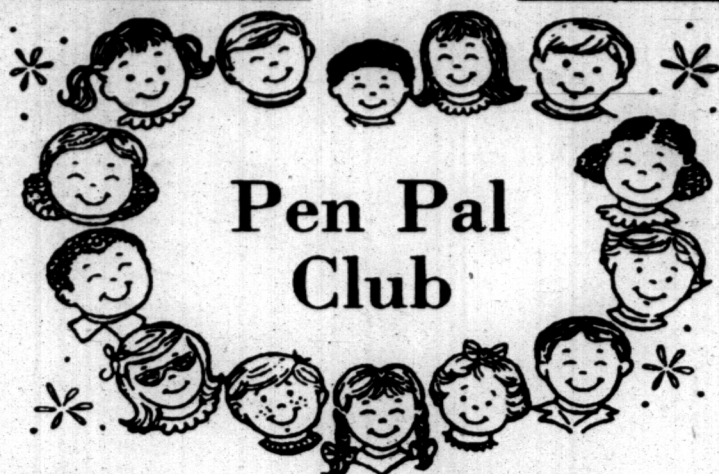
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(to be continued)





Pen Pal Club

Dear Pen Pal:

My name is Mary Mason Furr, and I am nine. I have a cat, two dogs, and a horse. I will be glad to write to a boy or girl. Please send a picture. I would love to be your pen pal. My address is P.O. Box 84, Hollandale MS 38748.

Mary Mason Furr

Dear Pen Pal:

Hey, so is there anyone out there who would like to have a pen pal? Well, my name is Nina Williams. I am 13 years old and my birthday is Sept. 6. I am a Christian and go to Salem Baptist Church. When I grow up, I want to be a missionary. My favorite authors are V.C. Andrews and Robin McKingley. My hobbies are reading the Bible, swimming, biking, and horseback riding. If you want to write me, my address is 24 Willie Pittman Rd., Tylertown, MS 39667. I would like a boy or girl of course.

Nina Williams

Dear Pen Pal:

My name is Kellie Poynor. I am 10 years old and in the 5th grade. I go to Lafayette Elementary School. I have two animals. One is a cat, the other one is a dog. I have a sister, Megan, and brother, Chance. My hobbies are swimming, bowling, and reading. My favorite color is pink. If you would like to be my pen pal, please write to Rt. 1, Box 104, Paris, MS 38949. Please send a picture.

Kellie Poynor

Dear Pen Pal:

My name is Dawn Rounsaville. I am 13 years old. I am in the seventh grade. I attend Shiloh Baptist Church. My hobbies are talking on the phone, shopping, and swimming. If you are a boy or girl, please write to: Rt. 1, Box 38 C-1, Big Creek, MS 38914.

Dawn Rounsaville

Dear Pen Pal:

Hello. My name is Kristin Hocutt. I am in the fourth grade. I am nine years old. My hobbies are watching TV, playing outside, playing with my sister, and riding horses. I would like a girl or boy of any age to write me at P.O. Box 23, Lexington, MS 39095.

Kristin Hocutt

Dear Pen Pal:

My name is Chasity Dawn Smith. I am 14 and in the eighth grade. I am a Christian. I go to Oakvale Baptist Church. My hobbies are riding bikes, playing nintendo, and collecting stamps. I would like boys or girls of any age to write me at: P.O. Box 5, Oakvale, MS 39656.

Chasity Dawn Smith

Dear Pen Pal:

My name is Sarah Stribling. I am nine years old and in the fourth grade. I live in Sturgis, Miss. I go to Sturgis Baptist Church. My hobbies are swimming, skating, reading, and going to Girl Scouts. If you would like to be my pen pal, you can write to me at: Rt. 2, Box 68, Sturgis, MS 39769.

Sarah Stribling

New Books from Broadman

NEW AMERICAN COMMENTARY, VOL. 10, EZRA, NEHEMIAH, ESTHER, by Mervin Breneman. An exegetical exposition of Holy Scripture. 383 pages.

THE STRENGTH OF A WOMAN, compiled by Linda McGinn. Activating the 12 dynamic qualities every woman possesses. 163 pages.

THE GROWTH SPIRAL, by Andy Anderson. The proven step-by-step method for calculating and predicting growth potential in your church. 205 pages.

TRUSTING GOD THROUGH THE WORST OF TIMES, by Kenneth and Joy Gage. A study of endurance and hope from the book of Job. 128 pages.

SINGLE PARENTING by

Jane Hannah and Dick Stafford. A biblical, back-to-basics approach to the challenges facing today's single parent. 153 pages.

BOYS AND GIRLS ALIKE AND DIFFERENT, AND MY BODY AND ME by Ellen Chambers and Norma Stevens. A biblical-based approach to sex education. 31 and 43 pages.

FRESH ENCOUNTER, by Henry Blackaby and Claude V. King. Study of God's pattern for revival and spiritual awakening. Notebook guide. 98 pages.

TODAY'S ADULT, by C. Ferris Jordan; **TODAY'S PRESCHOOLER**, by Dixie Ruth Crase; **TODAY'S CHILDREN**, by Eugene Chamberlain. A profile for teachers of each age group. 65 pages each.

CHILDREN'S PAGE

14-year-old turns loose change into solid foreign mission gift

By Donald D. Martin

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — When Jeremy Nottingham returned to Africa with his missionary parents, the 14-year-old left behind some money that's sure to catch up with his family.

Since last January, Jeremy had collected loose change in a two-foot-high plastic bank fashioned after a Coca-Cola bottle. By July, when the family left their home in Azle, Texas, for the southwest African nation of Namibia, he had packed the bottle with \$69 in coins.

He left the bank with his step-grandmother, Evelyn Bullington, and asked her to give it to the Lotie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions.

"This was his intention all year long," explained Bullington, who with her husband, Bill, was a missionary in West Africa for 20 years.

Jeremy even brought the bottle to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's Missionary Learning Center in Rockville, Va., where his parents went through

orientation training for overseas service.

"He kept saving all the time he was there," Bullington added. "Jeremy's like that. He's a young man who's serious about knowing what God wants for him."

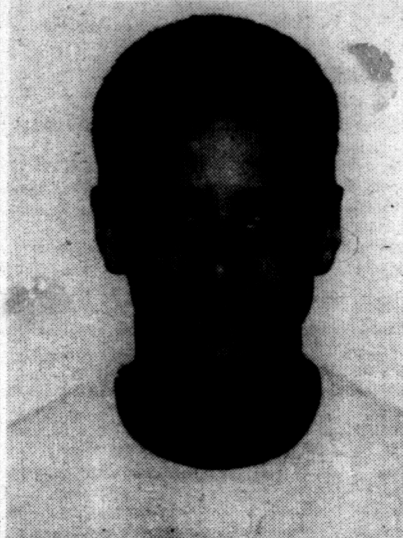
Jeremy's stepfather and mother, Bryan and Dana Bullington, are the first Southern Baptist missionaries to live in Rundu, Namibia, a remote city just across the border from Angola. They're developing youth ministries for Baptist churches in the area.

Jeremy's natural father, missionary Barry Nottingham, died of hepatitis and related complications in 1989 while working in Burkina Faso. After resigning as a missionary, Jeremy's mother married Bullington in 1990. He was appointed as a missionary — and she was reappointed — in April 1993.

The gift of coins one day could purchase discipleship material for youths in Rundu or help with the mission family's housing and transportation, said Bill Bullington, Jeremy's step-grandfather and the Foreign Mission Board's vice president for overseas services.

"Whatever the use, he's just getting there a little before the coins."

Martin writes for the FMB.



Jeremy Nottingham

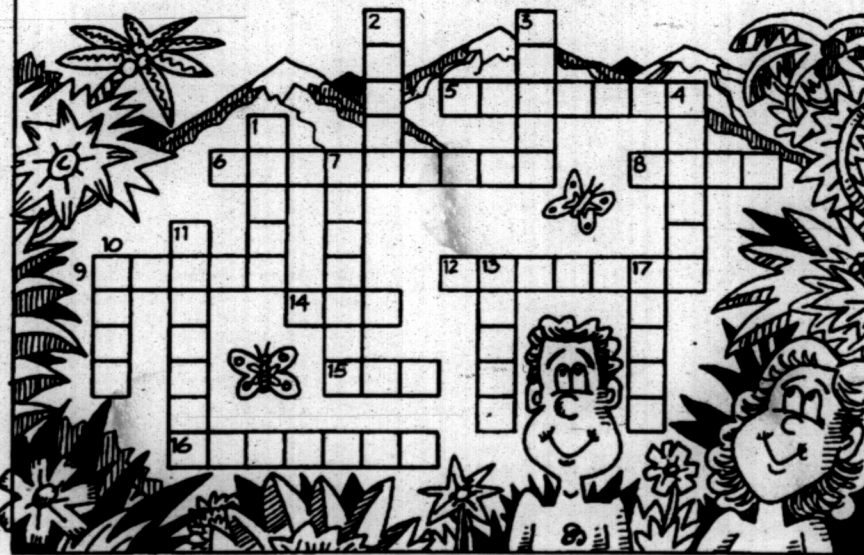
THE CREATION GENESIS 1-2:3

Across

5. There was evening and there was _____ v. 8
6. God created the great _____ of the sea. v. 21
8. God made all the creatures that _____ along the ground. v. 25
9. God made two _____ lights. v. 16
12. God _____ the seventh day. v. 2:3
14. God created _____ in his own image. v. 27
15. God created man to rule over the fish of the _____ v. 26
16. In the beginning God created the _____ and the earth. v. 1

Down

1. The land produced plants and trees bearing _____ v. 12
2. God gave man and woman every _____ and tree. v. 29
3. God created man to rule over the _____ of the air. v. 26
4. God called the dry _____ land. v. 10
7. God created livestock and wild _____ v. 24
10. God saw all he had made and it was _____ v. 31
11. By the _____ day God had finished his work. v. 2:2
13. God separated the _____ from the darkness. v. 4
17. God told them to fill the _____ and subdue it. v. 28



Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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ABC DFEG EG DFU YBHU BA PBX, DFZD JU WUUK
FEG LBVVZTXVUTDG: ZTX FEG LBVVZTXVUTDG
ZCU TBD PCEUHBMG.

AECGD RBFT AEHU:DFCUU

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Jude Twenty-One.

17 EARTH
13 LIGHT
11 SEVENTH
10 GOOD
7 ANIMALS
4 GROUND
3 BIRDS
2 PLANT
1 FRUIT
DOWN
16 HEAVENS
15 SEA
14 MAN
12 BLESSED
9 GREAT
8 MOVE
6 CREATURES
5 MORNING
ACROSS

Source: *Fun Stuff for Kids*
by Michael Streff
(Zondervan Publishing House, 1990).
Available at your local bookstore or
by calling 1-800-727-3480.

Baptist Record

January 6

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